

Yorkshire Rail Campaigner

Number 33 - June 2016

Yorkshire **railfuture**

President: Gerald Egan Vice-Presidents: Alan Whitehouse and Mike Crowhurst

£1 billion to be spent by Northern in 44 Months

By Mark Parry



Picture by Mark Parry From left to right: Mike Troke (Branch Secretary), Alex Hynes (Northern Managing Director), Nina Smith (Branch Chair) and Peter Myers (Northern).

In probably the most optimistic branch meeting ever to be held, Alex Hynes, the Northern Managing Director, announced a transformation of Northern services under its new owner ARRIVA Rail North. The franchise is to last 9 years, with a possible one year extension. But in the first 44 months they have to spend £1 billion making this franchise radically different from the previous one where no investment was provided for.

Northern will be the second largest train operating company in the UK and have taken on some staff and stations from TRANSPENNINE. There are now 5,200 staff and growing. Alex stressed that ARRIVA is a British Company that doesn't pay anything into Deutsche Bahn. The old Northern was doing well with good patronage but now the new Northern is to transform the services they operate. Continued overleaf...

Railfuture – Yorkshire Branch Meeting – 4 June 2016

13:00 Saturday at the Yorkshire Children's Centre, Huddersfield

Speaker – Chris Nutton of Transpennine - See flier for more details

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The new franchise is now managed by the Leeds based Rail North Partnership of 29 northern local authorities and the Department for Transport. Northern is split into four regions each with its own director based at Newcastle, Leeds, Manchester and Preston. The £1 billion investment is coming from the Government and ARRIVA and not the fare box.

Faster Journeys Journey times will be improved by having new trains that can reach 100 miles per hour where the rail infrastructure allows. Also the slower Pacer trains will be replaced with faster trains. However some of our members noted that the links from Hull, Doncaster and Sheffield to the East Coast will be more limited in the new timetable.

New Trains The whole train fleet will be transformed. The Pacers will go by October 2019, some trains will be refurbished and 281 new diesel carriages have already been ordered. None of the current train fleet is considered to meet the new franchise standards. All the new fleet is to have closed mission toilets so no waste will be discharged onto the tracks. All trains are to have free wifi and more leg room. Where regulations allow they hope to have less incessant announcements. Northern have a restriction on the number of diesel train miles they can operate under wires. The class 333 trains are to remain on the Leeds triangle and some 6 car trains will be added.

More Seats Seating capacity will be increased by 40%.

More Often There will be 15% more trains. Major timetable changes are expected in December 2017 when the Ordsall Chord opens giving greater flexibility across Manchester. A further tranche of key changes is also expected in December 2019. Sunday services are to be increased. An increase of services on the Hope Valley depends on a new loop being installed though.

New Customer Experience Refunds will be available for any delay over 30 minutes and can be paid in cash if you prefer. A new customer experience centre has already opened in Sheffield and is available 24/7 only closing over Christmas. You can now use a phone app to report problems and they are obliged to reply to you.

Station Improvements LED lighting will be installed at every station and depot saving money and helping the environment. 45 currently unstaffed stations are to be staffed including Headingley and Burley Park. This will involve installing a modular building and the staff will act as hosts, walking around waiting passengers offering help. All 447 stations are to have extra facilities.

New Ticketing Advance tickets will be available up to 15 minutes before departure, this is something some passengers have concern with though. The unreserved seat you select could become reserved while you're sat in it, by someone buying a ticket valid from a station further along the journey. Off peak tickets will now be available on every line. A new carnet ticket will be introduced. More ticket machines are to be installed taking both cash and card transactions, and they hope to monitor these 24/7. Passengers will also be able to use Payzone facilities at local shops to buy their tickets. Queuing times for tickets are to be measured but passengers should allow 5 minutes in order to buy their ticket. Alex is frustrated by the regulations that make ticketing so complex as he is not able to change this. They hope, over time, to smooth out some of the fare anomalies noticed when county boundaries are crossed.

Ticketless travel has been reduced from 10% to 5%, but this still means they still lose £12.5 millions each year. Eight stations are to be gated including Bradford Forster Square, Harrogate and Halifax. Driver operated doors will allow the conductors to focus on revenue collection.

Northern Connect This is a key initiative to link all towns over an 85,000 population in northern England. It involves 12 services running hourly and calling at 36 stations. There will be no first class on these services but this could be re-considered in later years.

High Speed Rail in South Yorkshire – Whither the Station?

by Nina Smith

A Personal View from Nina Smith

The Sheffield City Region will be served by two high speed railway lines – HS2 from London and what we are now asked to refer to as Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR). HS2 Ltd has proposed that the HS2 station be sited at Meadowhall. However, the siting of the HS2 station can surely no longer be considered on its own. It must be the same station that services NPR.

I understand that HS2 Ltd and the Metropolitan District Councils of Barnsley, Rotherham and Doncaster want the HS2 station to be at Meadowhall, Sheffield focused organisations want it to be in central Sheffield, with the site of the old Victoria station being one suggested site.

In my view, it is vital that the location of the South Yorkshire station should not be decided independently of whatever decision is made regarding the route of the proposed trans Pennine section of NPR. The trans Pennine section is only part of an envisaged network of 125mph trains connecting Liverpool, Manchester, Manchester Airport, Sheffield, Leeds, Hull, York and Newcastle. Surely the most sensible route for HS3 will be south of the Huddersfield (Diggle) route and north of the Hope Valley line. This very strongly points to the former Woodhead route, the track bed of which is mostly still there. At its eastern end, NPR should divide with a northern spur for Leeds and the North, and a southern one for Sheffield. These would join up with the HS2 line.

WHITHER THE STATION?

The case for and against Meadowhall Meadowhall has some positives. There is more space to build, it is near the M1, there are connections both with Supertram, and with classic rail to Barnsley, Rotherham, and Doncaster - as well as the major employment zone of the Dearne Valley, although this does not have a local station! One should have been built there when the major regeneration of that area started in the late 1990s; surely it will be eventually?

Apart from the space and Motorway access issues, these benefits for Meadowhall also apply to central Sheffield. I understand that Barnsley, Rotherham and Doncaster councils would like the HS2 station to be at Meadowhall, but how well does their case stack up? Barnsley is linked to Sheffield and Leeds by classic rail, and is approximately equidistant; it is increasingly relating to Leeds in terms of employment opportunities, and can just as easily access high speed rail there. Rotherham has heavy rail and Supertram/tram train links to Sheffield as well as Meadowhall. Doncaster is only one and a half hours from both London and Newcastle on the East Coast Main Line so its need for HS2 access is not strong. Meadowhall has the serious disadvantages of being some miles from the centre of the city that is the (sub-) regional capital. It is a long way from Sheffield's prosperous southern suburbs, where many potential users live, and from Chesterfield which is an important part of the Sheffield City Region. HS2 and HS3 are essentially city to city (and to airports) concepts, and are not designed to serve suburbs and satellite towns. A potential additional disadvantage of Meadowhall is recently discovered stability issues with the proposed site.

The case for a central Sheffield station As one of the prime benefits of HS3 will be a very fast connection between Sheffield and Manchester, it makes no sense to lengthen that journey time by terminating outside Sheffield city centre. Sheffield is the economic powerhouse and hub of a city region that goes south to Chesterfield and has close links with Derby, as well as its links to Barnsley, Rotherham and Doncaster to the North. From this perspective, a High Speed station in central Sheffield makes most sense. However, it is vital that the Sheffield high speed station is properly linked to the conventional rail network to facilitate high speed and classic routes interchange. That means the high speed line should use an enlarged Sheffield Midland, either at a new underground level, or by expanding westwards onto land currently occupied by a road and part of the bus station. The latter would necessitate putting the road into a tunnel and revamping the bus station. I assume that if high speed rail is to serve central Sheffield, it will need to be tunnelled. Cost must not be allowed to be an obstacle to the optimum long term solution. Tunnelling technology has advanced, is being widely used on Crossrail, and will be on certain southern and midlands sections of HS2, as well as Crossrail 2. A fully integrated transport hub based on a two-level or enlarged Sheffield Midland station, linked to the Ponds Forge Bus Station and to Supertram will be an enormous asset to the city, and must surely greatly assist the City regions development and regeneration.

I'd be interested for Yorkshire Rail Campaigner readers to respond to these ideas in the next issue.

Around the Region

by Mark Parry

Pontefract The Hemsworth and South Emsall Express reported on 7 March that campaigners were asking the Wakefield Council to support better rail services around Pontefract. Councillors Loughran (Pontefract South) and Lorna Malkin (Pontefract North) are asking Wakefield Council to support improved rail links from Pontefract to Doncaster and York amongst other options such as improved links to London. If they are successful, the issue can go to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, where the campaigners can push their case for more and better

services. The recent plan for improved rail services across the north of England involves the doubling of services to Leeds from Pontefract, but campaigners want more. It was pointed out that Xscape attracts seven million annual visitors and that these could be attracted onto rail services.

High Speed UK On 23 March the York Press reported on Railfuture member Colin Elliff's "High Speed UK" proposal. This is an alternative high speed rail proposal to the "HS2" the Government is implementing. Colin's colleague is a railway consultant from York who has written to MPs to promoting their scheme. He is former York Councillor Quentin Macdonald, who is also a railway signal and telecommunications engineer. Colin and Quentin claim their high Speed UK scheme would be cheaper and greener, and connect up many more cities than HS2. They say there are many issues about the current HS2 plans. Their High Speed UK plan was designed as an integrated national network, linking all the UK's key cities and principal regional airports including an integrated trans Pennine route.

Hull Sparks Electrification to Hull was raised by Hull North MP Diana Johnson and reported in the Yorkshire Post on 28 April. Ministers support electrification of the line between Selby and Hull but don't say when this will be built. This is irritating as the private sector has offered nearly £100 million towards the cost. Diana Johnson pointed out that this scheme has not progressed in two years, meanwhile London's Crossrail two has been announced.

Brighouse, Elland and Sowerby Bridge The Halifax and District Rail Action Group campaign to improve the Calder Valley service through Brighouse was reported in the Huddersfield Examiner on 5 May. They suggest that the Leeds-Brighouse-Manchester service is made into a "semi-fast" service instead of calling at all stations into Manchester. They say some improvements in capacity around Mirfield and Huddersfield will allow more trains through Brighouse which would link upper Calderdale with faster journeys to Huddersfield, Leeds and beyond.

The Halifax Group's "Rail News" for Spring 2016 said they have produced a report "Developing the Calder Valley Line train service—towards a better deal for Sowerby Bridge and the Brighouse corridor." This has been circulated to rail industry contacts including Rail North, and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority as well as the train operator and Network Rail. The Group is calling for more trains to stop at Sowerby Bridge when the big timetable changes happen in 2017 and 2019. The report also mentioned their ambitions for the Brighouse line, reported in the Examiner which they hope by the end of the decade will also have a station serving Elland.

Penistone Line In the Huddersfield, Penistone, Sheffield Rail Users Association "Track" newsletter for Spring 2016, they mention the introduction of extra Sunday services on the Penistone Line. Their aspiration is for an hourly service on Sundays and this improvement is a good step towards that goal. This was a key request they put to the Department for Transport during consultation. It's good to see the work Railfuture has done in consulting bearing fruit.

Level Crossings A Knaresborough crash, on a crossing near the Town, wrecking a tractor, was reported in the York Press on 29 April as well as in detail in "Rail". No one was badly injured, but Network Rail was criticised for a crossing that was not completely safe to operate. The next day the York Press reported on a disagreement over a Network Rail proposal to move a crossing at Bishopthorpe near Copmanthorpe. Network Rail want to move the crossing further away from the Village. However, York Outer MP Julian Sturdy wants to see a footbridge in the centre of the Village. Network Rail say a bridge would be too expensive.

Bradford to London The Telegraph and Argus reported, on 13 May, that an agreement had been reached to allow more Virgin east Coast trains from Bradford to London starting in 3 years time. They'll be every 2 hours from Forster Square. James Vasey of the Bradford Rail User Group said it was good news but noted there were no extra services to Scotland. Tim Callow of Aire Valley Users Group is looking forward to the new services but would like to see them along the Aire Valley line as well.

Branch Chair's Report

by Nina Smith

Since my last column, I was lucky enough to spend a month in New Zealand. My first time there. I liked the country and its people, and had a great holiday, but it also made me appreciate just

how good our railways are – even though we know that there is still much room for improvement and expansion. New Zealand Railways suffered a botched and damaging privatisation in the 1980s, but were renationalised in 2018 under the name of KiwiRail.

New Zealand Although New Zealand still has a fairly comprehensive network of lines, most are freight only save for the occasional passenger excursion. The only all-day, seven days a week, passenger services are on the suburban lines into Auckland and Wellington, sponsored by regional councils. Wellington has four lines and Auckland three. The only other train service aimed at New Zealanders rather than tourists is the one each way per day Monday to Friday KiwiRail commuter service from Palmerston North to Wellington - composed of re-gauged and renovated ex British Rail mark 2 carriages. There are three main line KiwiRail passenger services aimed at tourists. One is the three times a week service to/from Wellington and Auckland. You need to pre-book. I travelled on this in a northerly direction. The train was full, and I observed that it did carry a small number of passengers who were clearly using it as public transport rather than for the experience. One of the intermediate stops is Hamilton, 60 miles south of Auckland, a city of over 100,000 people, yet it does not have a regular passenger service into New Zealand's largest city; apparently, Hamilton Council refuse to pay for it. Yes, privatisation went mad in New Zealand in the 1980s, probably fuelled by an obsession with reducing the cost of the railways. The last "normal" passenger train on South Island, the service between Christchurch, Dunedin and Invercargill, ended in 2003. Christchurch, the South Island's largest city, is now only served by two trains that are aimed at tourists, the Coastliner which runs northwards to Picton, the ferry port for accessing North Island, and the other the TranzAlpine, which runs east-west to the small port of Greymouth. The three tourist services are of high quality with comfortable carriages with large windows built in 2011 (the last passenger carriages built in New Zealand), and with the wonderful attraction of a semi open-sided carriage for those who want to enjoy the fresh air and/or take great photos.

The suburban lines serving Auckland and Wellington are good, with modern electric multiple units. The greater Auckland region is desperately crying out for new services, with the first priority being an airport service, which could be achieved by extending the Onehunga Line by 10km from its present terminal. Auckland region has an excellent smartcard system similar to Oyster that can be used on all train and bus services in the region. Regrettably, Wellington does not have such a card, although I understand the aim is to have one by 2018. For lovers of electric road transport, Wellington still has trolleybuses, although stupidly the City Council plans to abandon the system not too far into the future. The trolleybuses are modern vehicles with New Zealand built bodies to a similar design as many of the diesel buses in both Wellington and Auckland.

Even more so than privatisation, New Zealand's long distance passenger services are the victim of the country having a broadly similar area to Great Britain yet having only four and a half million population – albeit one significantly boosted at any one time by its thriving tourist economy. New Zealand now has a comprehensive internal air network for those who want to get to places quickly, and a good network of long distance coaches for those seeking a cheaper mode, as well as accessing places without an airport.

There still seems to be significant volumes of rail freight, mostly intermodal, but also a fair amount of timber traffic. Speeds are slow – I think there is a 100kph maximum, and the system is 3ft 6in gauge – selected to reduce construction costs due to the mountainous terrain of much of New Zealand. Road transport was not allowed to compete with rail until the 1970s, but now there are large numbers of juggernauts on New Zealand roads, many hauled by iconic American tractor units such as Kenworth and International – which I suspect are built in Australia.

Finally, New Zealand has two city stations that are architectural gems. Dunedin's station, built in 1906 in a renaissance revival style, is considered by many to be the finest piece of architecture in the city. It now serves only privately operated "there-and-back" tourist trains on scenic routes. Wellington's main station, a terminal, is an Art Deco gem, opened in 1938.

New Franchises for Northern and TRANSPENNINE Back home, our new franchises have started. So far, the travelling public will have noticed little difference except for TRANSPENNINE EXPRESS's new livery (so far on few units) and the staff having new badges. Northern's trains are currently logo-less! Change doesn't happen overnight, but I for one am excited at the service improvements which both operators will have introduced by the end of the decade, notably new and better rolling stock and new through journey opportunities. But more improvements are needed and I was delighted that Alex Hynes, who continues at the helm of Northern, stated at Railfuture Yorkshire's April meeting that ARRIVA see the franchise agreement as the base on which further expansion can be built. That is music to all our ears, and hopefully the beneficiaries will include those areas that didn't get the improvements they need in the franchise specification. The Pontefract/Five Towns area and Brighouse come

immediately to mind. The latter is dependent on major infrastructure improvements that release capacity on the Huddersfield trans Pennine route, and it is vital that as part of the electrification related improvements to this route, extra capacity is created. As much as possible of the route should be restored to four tracks, and major junction improvements are necessary between the Huddersfield main line and the Calder valley line at Heaton Lodge and Bradley junctions. The Halifax and District Rail Action Group (HADRAG) have done a lot of work regarding this. Hopefully, recommendations in the Shaw report for a Northern “route” (Network Rail’s term for region) and that for an attitudinal change that would bring Network Rail closer to its ultimate customers - the passengers - will be implemented and increase the chances of this happening.

Open Access I’ve been thinking about open access. Hull Trains and Grand Central have made a success out of providing the travelling public with services which East Coast wasn’t providing, but these are all services to and from London. I’d like to see open access operators looking at other journey options. Alliance Rail has ideas for a Hull-Liverpool service via the Calder Valley. Another potential route is surely Hull to Scotland; perhaps Hull Trains could consider this? Ideally this would take the quicker route to York via Beverley, but that doesn’t exist yet. The case for reopening the Minsters Line from Beverley to York is, in my view, a no-brainer. Not just because it will take traffic off congested roads in the East Riding and nearer York, or because it will provide faster end-to-end Hull-York journeys, but also because an alternative to the Humber Estuary hugging Hessle route is strategically vital. There is a real risk of the Humber overflowing its banks and a Dawlish type situation happening. An alternative route is therefore vital. Support from Hull Trains (or Alliance Rail) for a Hull-Scotland service via this route would greatly aid the reopening campaign.

Other potential Open Access routes might be Norwich-Leeds, Norwich-York-Scotland, Swansea-Cardiff-Oxford-Leicester-Sheffield-Leeds, and Mike Troke’s suggestion of Leeds and/or Manchester – Scotland via Settle and Carlisle.

Rail User Groups affiliated to Railfuture within the Yorkshire Branch

| | |
|---|---|
| Aire Valley Rail Users’ Group | www.avrug.org.uk |
| Bradford Rail Users’ Group | www.bradfordrail.com |
| Halifax and District Rail Action Group | |
| Harrogate Line Rail Users’ Group | Email: hlrug@live.co.uk |
| Harrogate Line Supporters’ Group | www.harrogateline.org |
| Hope Valley | www.hopevalleyrailway.org.uk |
| Huddersfield, Penistone and Sheffield Rail Users’ Association | Email: hpsrua@btinternet.com |
| Hull and East Riding Rail Users’ Association | www.hullrailusers.co.uk |
| Lancaster and Skipton Rail Users’ Group | www.lasrug.btck.co.uk |
| Minster Rail Campaign | https://www.facebook.com/minstersrailcampaign/info?tab=overview |
| Selby and District Rail Users’ Group | http://www.selbytowncouncil.gov.uk/useful-links/selby-district-rail-users-group/ |
| Settle-Carlisle Line, Friends of the | www.foscl.org.uk |
| Skipton-East Lancashire Railway Action Partnership | www.selrap.org.uk |
| Upper Calder Valley Renaissance Sustainable Transport Group | Email: nhrasons@gmail.com |
| Yorkshire Coast Community Rail Partnership (Yorkshire Coast Wolds Coast Line) | www.yccrp.co.uk |

Autumn Yorkshire Railfuture Branch Meeting
 The speaker will be: Graham North – Lead Rail Officer
 North Yorkshire and City of York Councils
 8 October (to be confirmed) in York

Branch Key Contacts

| | | |
|---|---|--|
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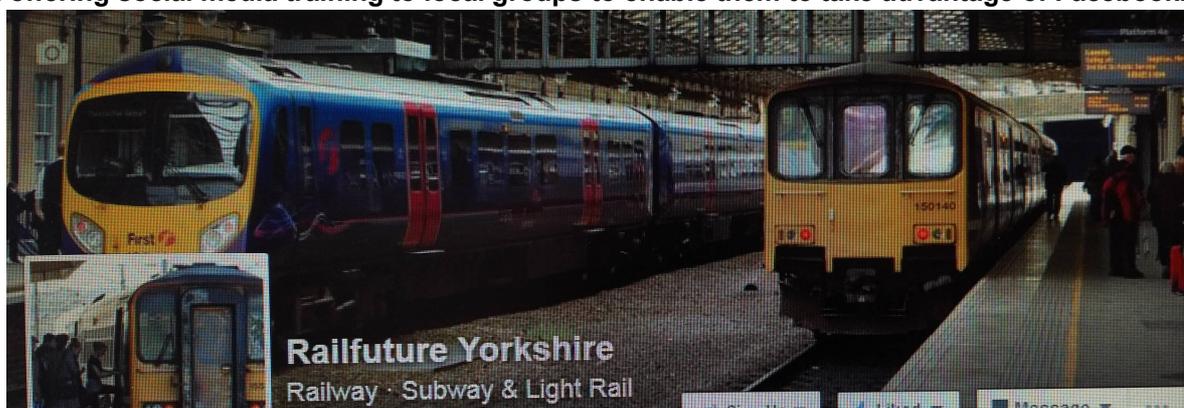
Membership & Social Media News: Paul Colbeck – Membership Secretary

Welcome to our new Yorkshire members: Alastair Cooper of **York**, Anthony Wallis of **Castleford**, Graham Thompson of **Leyburn** & Tony Williams of **Pontefract**.

The table below shows where our Yorkshire members live and the type of membership they hold.

| Membership Location | 197 | Membership Type | 197 |
|-----------------------------------|-----|---------------------------|-----|
| West Yorkshire | 90 | Full Member | 66 |
| North Yorkshire | 52 | Pensioner Member | 66 |
| South Yorkshire | 32 | Rail User Group Member | 17 |
| East Yorkshire | 12 | Life Member | 13 |
| Derbyshire | 5 | Unwaged Member | 11 |
| London | 2 | Supporting Member | 10 |
| Lancashire | 1 | Group/Family Member | 8 |
| Other Locations (outside England) | 3 | Other Types of Membership | 6 |

I am offering social media training to local groups to enable them to take advantage of Facebook.



Interested in Joining Railfuture for just £18 a year?

You would receive the national magazines as well as this Yorkshire Rail Campaigner and meet like-minded people at our meetings.

You can find out more and join by clicking on

<http://www.railfuture.org.uk/join/>

or by contacting our membership secretary Paul Colbeck,

14 St Giles Way, Copmanthorpe York YO23 3XT,

Paul.colbeck@railfuture.org.uk

If you join online please email Paul to let him know.

A branch visits organiser is needed.

Could you help with this please?

It would involve organising visits of rail interest, transport and any catering.

If you are interested then please contact Nina, her contact details are on the previous page.

Our next issue (**Yorkshire Rail Campaigner 34**) will be out in September 2016. If you would like to have your news included please email material, news and feedback to: Mark.Parry61@Virginmedia.com to arrive by **Saturday 6 August 2016**. Alternatively call or text 07941 642349.

Would you like your Yorkshire Rail Campaigner sent by email? It would save us money and you can enlarge it on your screen to read it more easily. You can always revert back to the post if you decide you don't like it.

Diary

21 May, Saturday: Railfuture Annual General Meeting, Milton Keynes, 10:00 for 10:45.
<http://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/>.

4 June, Saturday: Yorkshire Branch Meeting at Yorkshire Children's Centre, Huddersfield. Begins at 13:00 Chris Nutton of Transpennine Express speaking. see flyer for more details.

18 June, Saturday: Summer Conference at the Scottish Mining Museum, Newtongrange, 10:00 for 10:45-17:00.
<http://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/>

25 July, Monday: Campaign for Better Transport Rail group meets at Grove Inn near Bridgewater Place Tower in Leeds at 19:30.

8 October, Saturday: Yorkshire Branch Meeting in York. Graham North to speak, Lead Rail Officer of North Yorkshire and City of York Councils. Date to be confirmed.

12 November, Saturday: Rail User Conference at the Quaker Meeting House, 40 Bull Street, Birmingham, 10:00 for 10:45. <http://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/>

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